SIP Cover Sheet

California's Child and Family Services Review
System Improvement Plan

County:	Mono County
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Mono County Department of Social Services
Period of Plan:	10/1/2004 – 9/31/2005
Period of Outcomes Data:	**(1) Quarter ending June 30, 2003**
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CALIFORNIA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW
MONO COUNTY SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In 1997, the federal government enacted the Adoption & Safe Families Act (AFSA) that mandated the development of outcome measures for safety, permanency and child/family well-being. The Child and Family Services Review (CSFR) was created to measure outcomes in these areas. The federal government then began to audit the child welfare system in all 50 states using the CFSR. So far no states have passed this audit. As a result the federal government required states to develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP). In 2001, California enacted AB636 as the Child Welfare Services Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001. As part of this Act and California's PIP, all 58 counties in California are required to participate in the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR). The C-CFSR is comprised of three parts: County Self-Assessment; County System Improvement Plan (SIP); and Targeted Peer Quality Review (TPQR).

The County Self-Assessment for Mono County was completed June 30, 2004, with input from public and private agencies that play a role in the lives of children and families. The System improvement Plan (SIP) is the second part of the C-CFSR to be completed. The first SIP is written for a twelve-month period. Subsequent SIPs will be written for a three-year period. The SIP will be updated on an annual basis. The SIP is considered an operational agreement between the County and State outlining how the County will improve its system of care for children and youth and forms an important part of the system for reporting on progress toward meeting agreed upon improvement goals using the C-CFSR outcomes and indicators.

The SIP focuses on outcomes. Data outcomes are provided by the State on a quarterly basis and are based on information entered into the statewide electronic case management system: Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Each area identified by the County that will be addressed in the SIP will have a plan that includes milestones, timeframes, and proposed improvement goals for the County to achieve.

Mono County has chosen three areas for improvement:
- Timely Responses to Referrals/Timely Social Worker Visits
- Recruitment, Training, and Support of Foster Homes.
- Independent Living Program and Resources for Emancipating Youth

Local Planning Bodies

To develop the Mono County Self Assessment and System Improvement Plan, input was received from:

- Adoptions (CDSS)
- CWS Staff
- Foster Parents
- Juvenile Court
- Law Enforcement
- Local Education
- Local Tribes
- Mental Health
- Parents
- Probation
- Public Health

On an on-going basis Child Welfare Services participates in the following collaborations with public and private agencies: Child Abuse Prevention Council; Death Review Team; Domestic Violence Prevention Task Force; Multi-Disciplinary Team; MAC (Multi-Agency Council); School Attendance Review Board; Sexual Assault Response Team.

In addition, Mono County Child Welfare Services has developed strategies to more effectively work in collaboration with our partners. These strategies include community meetings where questions, concerns, and suggestions are discussed with community members about Child Welfare regulations and procedures, and assigning a CPS social worker to every public school in Mono County to be available to take child abuse reports and answer questions to support school staff in identifying children at risk.

Families in Partnership (FIP), a Mental Health/DSS-Child Welfare Services/Probations collaboration provides intensive case management for families at risk, counseling home visits, mentoring and a parent partner/outreach consultant. FIP consists of a Mental Health therapist, a Probation Officer, a Social Worker IV from CWS, and a parent partner/outreach and recreational coordinator. F.I.P. takes a team approach in addressing family problems and provides intensive services for families receiving Voluntary or Court-Ordered Family Maintenance.

Findings that Support Qualitative Change

Input from collaborating agencies is integrated in to the SIP through Improvement Goals, Strategies, and Milestones. Data from the Quarterly Outcome and Accountability County Data Reports published by the California Department of Social Services provide summary level Federal/State program measures served as the basis of the County Self Assessment. Quarterly Outcomes and Accountability County Data Reports will also be used to track county performance over time.

With Mono County's small numbers it was difficult to identify trends. However during the second and third quarters of 2003, outcome data provided by CDSS indicated that Mono County performed below state averages in the following areas: Outcome 2B – Percent of Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals with a Timely Response; and 2C – Timely Social Worker Visits with a Child. Review of case data revealed that timely responses were impacted by staff shortages and data input errors. Analysis of our case data in CWS/CMS for social worker visits with children in placement showed that visits were made but the correct fields in CWS/CMS were not entered, again revealing a need for improvement in data entry.

Mono County's Outcome Measures in the following areas indicated that Mono County did not meet Federal/State standards: Recurrence of Maltreatment within 12 months; Recurrence of Maltreatment with 12 months after First Substantiated Allegation. Since our numbers of referrals and substantiations are low it is difficult to determine if this is a trend, however, Mono County is already addressing these issues by increasing the number of Voluntary Family Maintenance cases, and referrals to FIP for intensive case management services.

Another area of concern that affects permanency outcomes for foster children is recruitment, retention, training, and support for foster parents and relative homes. Mono County currently has only two licensed family homes providing emergency foster care. Most of our children must be placed out of county with either foster family agencies or group homes. Placement out of county impacts family visitation and re-unification. Another improvement goal is to recruit and retain more foster homes and provide necessary training and support for these homes.

Mono County's Independent Living Program for foster youth, 16 years and older, has been minimal. Most of our placements are out of county, therefore, we utilize services provided by the county where the child is placed, the foster family agency or group home. ILP services include information about life skills such as budgeting, banking, shopping, job search and job retention, and information about colleges, trade schools, and available grants. If it is our goal to place children with relatives or foster homes in their community, ILP services also need to be improved within our county. CWS staff have recommended the following: Utilization of WIA services for all foster youth in the county; utilization of community college resources; and mentors for foster children and emancipated foster children.

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Timely Response to Referrals; Timely response to Referrals				

County's Current Performance: Information received from the Quarterly Outcome and Accountability Reports published by CDSS showed that Mono County faired poorly in some areas such as Timely Response to Referrals and Timely Social Worker Views. Discussions with CWS staff and a review of data in CWS/CMS revealed that timely response to referrals were impacted by staff shortages, and incomplete or incorrect data entry in CWS/CMS. In addition, timely social worker visits were being made, however, important fields were not entered correctly in CWS/CMS. Currently Mono County is in 100% compliance with timely response to referrals and social worker visits with children. We have received 3 days of in-county training focused on CWS/CMS data entry around Outcome Measures.

Improvement Goal 1.0 Implement a quality control system to ensure that timely responses to referrals and timely social worker visits are being made..

Strategy 1. 1 Fill all social worker positions. Currently one social worker opening exists.	**Strategy Rationale** Although are case numbers are small, each CWS social worker is generic and is required to do all CWS programs including Emergency Response, Family Reunification, Family Maintenance, Court, Permanent Placement, and ILP.

Milestone		**Timeframe**		**Assigned to**	
	1.1.1 Recruit and hire a Social Worker.		01/31/05		DSS Director
	1.1.2 Provide training for new social worker that includes Core, Emergency Response Protocol, Risk Assessment, New Users training in CWS/CMS.		07/31/05		Program Manager UC Davis Training Officer
	1.1.3 Integrate the new social worker into the on-call and emergency response s schedule.		08/31/05		Program Manager

			Timeframe		Assigned to	

Strategy 1. 2 Assess the current quality control and implement necessary changes to ensure that timely responses and visits are made and documented. Develop protocols for prioritization of response.

Strategy Rationale Quality control by supervisors and program managers in CWS will ensure response to referrals and social worker visits are made timely as well as identifying training needs for staff.

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to
	1.2.1. Assess current practices being utilized to ensure that timely responses and visits are being made. Identify areas that need to be addressed to ensure compliance with mandated timeframes.		1/31/05		Program Manager
	1.2.2 Identify tracking tools that can be used to ensure timely response and visits.		1/31/05		Program Manager
	1.2.3 Implement standard practice for supervisors and program managers on timely visits and referral responses in respect to staff performance outcomes.		1/31/05		Program Manager

Improvement Goal 2.0 Accurately record social worker visits and other CWS activities in CWS/CMS.

Strategy 2.1 Identify and provide on-going staff training to accurately input data in CMS/CWS.

Strategy Rationale   Due to the complexity of the CWS/CMS system and Child Welfare Services regulations, comprehensive and on-going training is necessary to maintain accuracy of information in CWS/CMS.

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to
	2.1.1 Review current CWS/CMS training materials and guides. Identify staff needs and available training materials and classes specific to CWS/CMS.		11/30/04		Program Manager
	2.1.2 Schedule and provide training for CWS staff.		12/31/04		Program Manager
	2.1.3 Implement standard practices that ensure that staff is entering data accurately and timely.		03/31/05		Program Manager

Strategy 2. 2 Develop case review procedures in CWS/CMS to ensure accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of data entry.				**Strategy Rationale** Mono Co. social workers have always entered data on a timely basis, with an emphasis on contacts, court reports, referrals, and case plans. However, with the advent of Outcome Measures it is necessary to have many other data elements accurately recorded to reflect work being done by CWS staff.	
Milestone	**2.2.1** Program Manager, lead social worker review case procedures and receive training for case review in CWS/CMS. .	**Timeframe**	12/31/04	**Assigned to**	Program Manager CWS Lead Social Worker
	2.2.2 Develop or adapt prioritized data entry "checklist." Commence monthly case reviews. Develop data reports that reflect performance.		12/31/04		Program Manager CWS Lead Social Worker.
	2.2.3 Monitor progress and confer as to corrective actions, and assure appropriate actions are taken by staff.		on-going		Program Manager CWS Lead Social Worker
Strategy 2.3 Program Manager will attend CWDA CWS regional meetings, develop a CWS/CMS training protocol for new social workers, and be aware of available through UC Davis.				**Strategy Rationale [1]** In order to stay up to date with changes and procedures in CWS Mono County must attend regional meetings and be aware of training resources. Emphasis on training new workers in important for maintaining timely and accurate data input.	
Milestone	**2.3.1** Program Manager will attend regional CWDA CWS meetings on a monthly basis.	**Timeframe**	Beginning 10/04 and on-going.	**Assigned to**	Program Manager
	2.3.2 Develop a training schedule for CWS/CMS training for new Social Workers including available on-site training.		1/31/05		Program Manager
	2.3.3 Utility quarterly meeting with CWS/CMS specialist to utilize Business Objects.		on-going		Program Manager

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Unknown system changes may be identified in the strategies outlined.
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Staff may need additional training on how to accurately record timely social worker response and visits in CWS/CMS. Supervisors, social workers and program managers will need training on methods for ensuring quality control.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Recruitment, Training, and Support for Foster Parents.

County's Current Performance: Mono County currently has 2 licensed foster homes that are available for emergency placements. This potentially impacts several Permanency and Stability Outcomes and Family Relationships and Community Connections: Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification; Multiple Foster Care Placements, Siblings Placed Together in Foster Care, Foster Care Placement in the Least Restrictive Setting. Foster homes in Mono County are licensed by Community Care Licensing. A representative from CCL out of the Fresno office, coordinates foster family orientations with Mono County DSS. Although 9 families applied for licenses in the past 12 months, only one applicant followed through. Feedback from participants in the County Self Assessment process indicate that it is vitally important to have a sufficient number of foster homes and to expand the pool of available placement resources.

Improvement Goal 3.0 Increase the number of licensed foster homes in Mono County and improve training and support for foster, kinship, and adoptive families.

Strategy 3. 1 Review the possibility of hiring an individual to recruit and train foster parents and seeking grants and combined agency funding to be involved with recruitment.	**Strategy Rationale** There is a great need for foster parents in Mono County. Thus far Mono County has not succeeded in recruiting foster homes and developing an on-going system that includes retention, training and support for foster families. A full time person is necessary for the task.

	Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to
	3.1.1 HHS Director and DSS Director meet to discuss funding options.		11/30/04		HHS Director CWS Director
	3.1.2 Hire a foster care recruitment and training coordinator.		02/28/05		HHS Director CWS Director
	3.1.3 Foster care coordinator learns about licensing requirements and Mono County foster care needs.		03/31/05		

Strategy 3. 2 Develop an outreach plan for recruitment that involves community organizations such as churches, civic organizations, schools, and neighborhoods.				**Strategy Rationale** Local churches, civic organizations, and neighborhoods are largely untapped resources. Churches can "wraparound" a foster family providing important support.	
Milestone	**3.2.1**. Develop a foster care presentation geared toward a variety of community organizations.	**Timeframe**	04/30/05	**Assigned to**	Foster Care Recruiter
	3.2.2 Identify churches, civic organizations, schools, neighborhoods for presentations. Identify staff, community member to contact and schedule presentation.		05/05 – on-going		Foster Care Recruiter
	3.2.3 Report on progress and results HHS Director.		05/05 – on-going		Foster Care Recruiter
Strategy 3.3 Develop training curriculum for initial and on-going training for foster parents. The training curriculum will also include training for specialized care.				**Strategy Rationale** Consistent training resources need to be developed and utilized to provide consistent training for foster parents and potential foster parents.	
Milestone	**3.3.1** Identify raining resources for First Aid/CPR and initial training in Mono County. Contact local community colleges, and community colleges on-line about courses for foster parents.	**Timeframe**	05/31/05	**Assigned to**	Foster Care Recruiter
	3.3.2 Identify training that is available for specialized care.		06/30/05		Foster Care Recruiter
	3.3.3 Develop a list of training resources to share with foster parents, CWS, Probation, Mental Health, FIP. Update training providers as necessary.		08/31/05 and on-going		Foster Care Recruiter

		Timeframe		Assigned to	
Strategy 3.4 Assist potential foster parents with the licensing process. Maintain contact with foster homes to address training needs. Coordinate with FIP, CWS, Probation to discuss placement needs.				**Strategy Rationale** The licensing process can be daunting and therefore it is important that the recruiter is available to assist potential foster parents. Coordinating on-going training is required for foster parents and coordination with placing agencies.	
Milestone	**3.4.1** Schedule foster parent orientations with CCL representative. Assist potential foster parents with the licensing process.	On-going		Foster Parent Recruiter	
	3.4.2 Provide training information for foster parents.	On-going		Foster Parent Recruiter	
	3.4.3 Participate with FIP in placement discussions when appropriate.	On-going		Foster Parent Recruiter	

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Youth Emancipating from Foster Care are Prepared to Transition to Adulthood.				

County's Current Performance: Mono County CWS/Probation have very few children in placement . In Mono County Independent Living Services have met minimum requirements as most of our foster youth are placed out of county and they are provided services in the placement county. At present existing services that may be available through the community college and WIA are not coordinated with CWS/Probation foster youth.

Improvement Goal 4.0 Enhance Independent Living Program Services for foster youth in Mono County.

Strategy 4.1 IIP efforts in Mono County have not been coordinated with existing resources.			**Strategy Rationale** Coordination of resources would assist Social Workers, therapists, and probation officers to provide information to foster youth.	
	4.1.1 CWS, Probation, FIP meet with the local community college, WIA, and the local schools to find about services for foster youth.	12/31/04		Program Manager
	4.1.2 Identify life skills materials or classes in Mono County that can be shared with Mono County Social Workers, Probation officers.	**Timeframe** 12/31/04	**Assigned to**	Program Manager
	4.1.3 Develop an ILP plan for Mono County.	01/31//05		Program Manager

Strategy 4. 2 Encourage foster care youth to take advantage of grant and scholarships that are available for youth in foster care.			**Strategy Rationale** Foster youth are encouraged to reach their full potential.	
Milestone	**4.2.1**. CWS receives information about scholarships and grants for youth in foster care. This information should also be provided to Probation officers and FIP.	On-going		Program Manager CWS Social Workers Probations Officer FIP Team
	4.2.2 CWS Social Workers, Probation Officers, and FIP staff encourage foster care, wraparound, and other youth to take advantage of grants and scholarships for college and trade schools	**Timeframe** On-going	**Assigned to**	Program Manager CWS Social Workers Probation Officer FIP Team
	4.2.3 CWS Social Workers, Probation Officers, and FIP staff encourage foster care youth to take advantage of employment opportunities through WIA and other sources..	On-going		Program Manager CWS Social Workers Probation Officers FIP Team

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to	
Strategy 4. 3 Develop strategies to provide mentors for foster youth and emancipated foster youth in Mono County.			**Strategy Rationale** Foster youth can benefit from mentor to reach their full potential.		
	4.3.1 Identify existing mentoring programs.		3/31/05		CWS Social Workers Probations Officers FIP Team
	4.3.2 Encourage foster youth to utilize mentors,		5/31/05		CWS Social Workers Probation Officers FIP Team
	4.3.3 Share written materials, publications about and for foster care youth, videos, etc. with foster youth.		5/31/05		CWS Social Worker Probation Office Team

Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
Community college programs can offer opportunities for foster youth.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
Other agencies and programs can provide assistance for foster youth especially in terms of mentoring.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.